

Message Text

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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 247

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: EAGR, UR

SUBJECT: FOOD SUPPLIES AND PRICES, DECEMBER 1975

1. EMBASSY SURVEY INDICATES SUPPLIES OF AVAILABLE FOODS IN MOSCOW, WHILE CONTINUING TO SHRINK FROM LEVELS OBSERVED LATE NOVEMBER, WERE ADEQUATE TO MEET APPARENT CONSUMER DEMANDS. DAIRY PRODUCTS, POLTRY, MEATS, BEEF, PORK AND MUTTON SUPPLIES CONTINUED FIRM. AVAILABILITY OF EGGS WAS MUCH REDUCED FROM OBSERVED NOVEMBER LEVEL. SUPPLIES OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS CONTINUED TO DECREASE IN MARKETS SAMPLED.

2. NO LETTUCE, PEPPERS, CUCUMBERS, ORANGES OR SQUASH WERE OBSERVED IN EITHER THE STATE OR COLLECTIVE MARKETS. VERY LIMITED SUPPLIES OF TOMATOES WERE OBSERVED IN COLLECTIVE MARKETS. ONIONS WERE NOT AVAILABLE IN STATE STORES AND WERE FOUND IN ONLY LIMITED QUANTITY IN COLLECTIVE MARKETS AT RUBLES 2 PER KILO (A YEAR EARLIER THE PRICE WAS FIFTY-SEVENTY KOPEKS PER KILO). WHILE CATEGORIES OF BREAD REMAIN AVAILABLE AS BEFORE, APPEARANCE OF LOAVES CLEARLY INDICATES SOME DETERIORATION IN QUALITY.

3. IN BOTH STATE AND COLLECTIVE MARKETS, PRICES OF VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF MEAT REMAIN AT LEVELS COMPARABLE TO THOSE OF A YEAR
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EARLIER. FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRICES CONTINUE AT OR SLIGHTLY

ABOVE DECEMBER 1974 LEVELS.

4. COMMENT - MARKET ACTIVITY WAS LIGHT IN ALL MARKETS OBSERVED, EXCEPT AT THE CENTRAL MARKET. CONSIDERABLY GREATER MARKET ACTIVITY WAS OBSERVED JUST BEFORE THE NOVEMBER 1975 HOLIDAYS THAN JUST PRECEDING RECENT YEAR-END HOLIDAY PERIOD. WHILE FOOD SELECTION AND CHOICES CONTINUE TO SHRINK, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO SHORTAGE OF BASIC FOOD COMMODITIES IN MOSCOW AREA. THUS FAR THIS WINTER, AVAILABILITY OF FOOD PRODUCTS CONTINUES TO FOLLOW PAST SEASONAL TRENDS.
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